

and honor of Wilson. He vastly enriched the ornithological literature of the world, and laid the foundation in this country of that apparently fascinating drudgery, characterized "synonymy," which is so easily degenerated into a bore.

[Since writing the above, Rhoads' brief memoir of George Ord has appeared in the *Cassinia*, No. XII, 1908 (issued March, 1909). The author has been unable to ascertain whether the subject of his sketch was born in Philadelphia or England. I have been informed by Henry T. Coates, who has it direct from Willis P. Hazard, an old-time collector of Wilson's, that Ord was born and had died in the same house on Front street.]

THE STATUS OF THE AMERICAN BARN OWL (*Strix pratincola*) IN PICKAWAY COUNTY, OHIO.

BY B. R. BALES, M.D.

Like several other species, notably Bewick's Wren and the Mockingbird, it has only been in comparatively recent years that the Barn Owl has been considered an Ohio bird. In Dr. J. M. Wheaton's "Report of the Birds of Ohio," published in 1880, only five instances of this bird's capture had been recorded in this state, and one of these specimens was taken in Pickaway County. At the time that Dr. Howard Jones informed Dr. Wheaton of the capture of this species in the summer of 1873, he also informed him of a specimen taken in the spring of 1870, but for some unaccountable reason, this record was not incorporated in Dr. Wheaton's Report. Both of these birds were killed in the Scioto River bottoms, west of Circleville. Only one of these was preserved, it being sent to the Museum of Hobart College at Geneva, N. Y. On February 14, 1890, a specimen that had been taken in the Scioto River bottom west of Circleville was brought to me; this was the first Barn Owl I had ever seen. In May of the following year, 1891, a bird of the year, fully feathered, was brought to me; it had been shot at Forest Cemetery, which is bounded on one side by the Ohio Canal, and is less than a mile north of Circleville.

In 1892, a specimen was shot at the Turney farm, about two and one-half miles west of Circleville, and was mounted by Mr. Oliver Davie for Mr. R. G. McCoy, who was living on this farm at the time.

In 1893, another bird was shot on this same farm, and was brought to Dr. Howard Jones, who mounted it.

In 1894, still another was killed on the same farm, and was mounted by Mr. Davie for Mr. McCoy.

In 1895, two young Owls, well feathered, were captured alive on the same farm, and did duty as freaks in a saloon in Circleville.

It remained for Dr. Howard Jones to take the first set of eggs. These were secured at the Turney farm on May 27, 1897, from a natural cavity, about twenty-five feet from the ground, in a maple tree standing on the bank of a mill race, within a quarter of a mile of Darby Creek. There were six eggs in the nest; incubation varied, from one egg in which incubation was slight, to one in which incubation was well advanced. This nesting site is illustrated in Dawson's "Birds of Ohio." It is very likely that all of the Owls taken from 1892 to 1897 were reared in this cavity.

In 1898, two well-feathered young were brought to Dr. Howard Jones; they were taken at the outskirts of Circleville, near Hargus Creek.

In 1900, a tinner kept one in a cage in his shop for some time. This bird also came from along Hargus Creek, within a mile or two east of Circleville.

On February 18, 1908, a male in excellent plumage was brought to me: it was shot at the ice houses of the Circleville Ice Company, which are situated just north of Circleville, along the Ohio Canal, one-half mile from the Scioto River.

On May 11, 1908, I had the good fortune to discover the nest of this species. The nest was situated in a large sycamore tree standing on the bank of, and overhanging Hargus Creek, one mile east of Circleville. The tree has lost its top, and from the point where it is broken, there extends upward for about twenty-five feet, a large limb and several good-sized branches. At the point where the top is broken off, the wood has decayed, forming a cavity three feet deep. At the bottom of the cavity six eggs were found, the eggs being laid on the rotted wood with no attempt at nest-building. Both male and female Owls were on the nest when it was discovered. Incu-

bation in the eggs varied from one, in which there was just a trace of blood showing, to one that was fully one-half incubated. The cavity was forty feet from the ground.

This same tree was the home of a "happy family." Four feet below the Owl's nest was a den of Fox Squirrels (*Sciurus rufiventer*) that contained four young ones, and the limb and one of the larger branches above the Owl's nest, an occupied nest each of Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) and Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus luteus*).

On July 17, 1908, a small colored boy brought me two young Owls; they were still covered with a grayish white down and showed quite a difference in size. The boy said there were two more in the nest, but that they were much smaller than the ones brought to me. These were taken from a hollow in a large sycamore tree, standing on the banks of Hargus Creek, within the corporation limits of Circleville and about a mile west of the nest mentioned above. It is possible that this was the second laying for the same pair of birds.

On November 11, 1908, a male in full plumage was brought to me; it was shot at the ice houses, the same place as the one taken in February, 1908, and on the following day, November 12, a female was brought in. This bird was shot from a willow tree in day time, in the Scioto River bottoms, west of Circleville.

While it is possible, and very probable, that there have been other specimens of this species taken in Pickaway County, these, I think, are the only authentic records.

From the above records, it will be seen that every specimen mentioned was taken in the vicinity of water, indicating that this bird, at least in this locality, has a preference for such situations.

It will also be noticed that all of the specimens were taken within a radius of two and a half miles of Circleville, indicating a preference for the vicinity of dwellings.

That this Owl is one of the most valuable birds to the agricultural interests is shown by the stomach contents of the three full grown birds that I observed in 1908.

Stomach No. 1 contained the remains of three mice; stom-

ach No. 2, the remains of two mice; stomach No. 3 the remains of three mice and a shrew.

It has been stated that the apparent scarcity of Barn Owls in times ago was not due to the actual scarcity of the birds, but was due to the fact that they had better means of concealment, and that with the gradual destruction of woodlands, came the gradual increase in numbers observed. Be this as it may, no bird is deserving of more protection than the Barn Owl, for it is truly the farmer's friend.

CIRCLEVILLE, OHIO, Jan. 5, 1909.

MIGRATION HALTS.

ALTHEA R. SHERMAN.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the duration of visits from migrating birds is that of a minute, a day, a week, a month, or even more, except when the visitors are of rare species, or have some distinguishing marks, or are associated in some special manner with others of their kind. Of this last named class was a Downy Woodpecker, attended by one of his young, which he was feeding constantly, although the youngster appeared quite able to take care of itself; their advent was upon the Fourth of July, and they staid two days. This may not be considered a true migration halt, yet the early shifting of birds from their breeding range is worthy of note, and possibly may mark the beginning of their southward movement. The summer visiting species that come under my observation are of two sorts, as regards their breeding haunts, those of the true woodland varieties, and the marsh birds.

Usually during June only our neighborhood breeding birds are to be seen, but in the early days of July the forest birds begin to come upon the prairie. In 1908 the Downy Woodpeckers were the first pioneers, followed by a juvenile male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, then Hairy Woodpecker, Chickadee, Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow Warbler, Redstart, and Screech Owl came in rapid succession. One summer a very ragged Redstart was seen about our place almost every day for nearly